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PROGRAM TV 3 Total News

STATION WSYR TV

DATE December 24, 1974 6:00 PM

CITY Syracuse, N.Y.

ROLE OF SYRACUSE OFFICE PURSUED

NEWSCASTER: Both of Syracuse's congressmen are now expressing interest in knowing more about the Central Intelligence Agency and its operations following reports that civilians were spied upon by CIA agents during the Vietnam protest era. Congressman James Hanley's office said today that Hanley is considering whether to seek a personal interview with the head of the Syracuse CIA office to get personal assurances that no surveillance was carried out here.

Ron Hastings has more on the story.

RON HASTINGS: We first asked Congressman William Walsh for assistance in getting an interview with Hayden Moberly (?), director of the Domestic Collection Division Office in Syracuse last September. A letter was sent by Walsh to the CIA in Washington, and a reply was received from Lt. General Vernon Walters. Walters said because of the nature of its duties required by law and by consideration of national security, it is not the policy of this agency to authorize such interviews.

Congressman Walsh then wrote back, saying President Ford has called for a new spirit of openness in the federal government and it is my hope that the CIA, to the extent it is able, will join in that spirit. I certainly understand the need for secrecy surrounding some of the CIA's activities, wrote Walsh, but in light of the primary role of the Domestic Collection Division -- that is, interviewing people who have travelled abroad on a knowing and voluntary basis -- I cannot understand the need for secrecy in this area.

This time a reply, described as final, was hand-delivered by a general to Walsh's office, signed by CIA Director William Colby. In it, Colby said "Acceding to requests such as those made by WSYR conflicts with the obligation we have undertaken to protect the anonymity of those who out of patriotic motives provide information on foreign developments. Thus the discreet functioning of our representatives factor in their success in obtaining information."